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A WALK TO THE NYASSA COUNTRY.

OUR EXPEDITION left Zanzibar at the end of August, and one of the Union Company's mail steamers landed us the next morning but one at Lindi, a place which I had long since selected as being the nearest point to the Lake Nyassa, and at the same time possessing one of the best and certainly the most accessible harbour on that part of the coast, with high land all around. We knew also on good authority that porters and guides were to be had there.

We had the most diverse estimates of the time likely to be taken up by the journey, varying from ten days to six months. I had hoped to have started a month earlier, but was hindered by other business. The rains are over in May, but for several months the

lower grounds are full of water and the dry-ing up time is the unhealthiest of all seasons. I was accompanied by the Rev. C. A. James, Mr. A Bellville and Mr. Beardall, (the party whom I hoped to place in a permanent station at Mataka's town or elsewhere near the Lake) with about twenty Zanzibar porters under Chuma and Susi, Livingstone's men.

I had already had some reason to fear as to the health of the party, Mr. James and Mr. Beardall both seeming to be oversoon affected by the coast climate, and Mr. Bellville's health had been shattered on the Shire, while a member of Faulkner's disastrous ex-pedition. I soon found that the coast men were putting hindrances in our way, not at all openly, but by way of delays and promises deferred. Fearing the effect of inaction on my companions, I sent them on two little exploring journeys, Mr. James to see a little of the Mweras and their country, and Mr. Bellville to look for a navigable river said to fall into the sea between Kilwa and Lindi. On Mr Bellville's return I sent him to Kilwa first, and thence on to Zanzibar, with Susi as interpreter, to hire porters, the Lindi men being slow to come forward and standing out for extravagant rates of payment.

The ants are the true kings of the forest.
The coast men have a legend that when King Solomon reigned, and all the beasts acknowledged his authority, the ants came to complain that the elephants trod upon them and killed them by hundreds. The elephants made light of it, and said that, as they were the strongest of all beasts, the ants should get out of their way. The ants denied their strength and offered to fight them. The bystanders laughed, but king Solomon appointed place and time, so the elephants sent ten or twelve of their biggest, and the ants came in myriads. At the first onset the ants were crushed by thousands, but almost immediately the foremost elephants, knocking over every thing in their way, rushed to the nearest water, for their trunks and ears, and eyes, and lips, and every part tender enough for an ant to nip was full of them, cutting their way in deeper and deeper. The other elephants thereupon said that it was beneath their dignity to fight with creatures so insignificant, but Solomon gave it for the ants, and from that day forward, let lions and elephants boast as they may, they tread carefully when they see ants before them, and no one since has ever ventured to offer to fight them. We

had ourselves experience of their power, and on one occasion nearly set our encampment on fire in trying to turn their course by strewing live embers about, fire being the only thing they fear.

The approach to the Rovuma is marked by the sudden rising of great mountainous masses of granite rock, often of grotesque shapes, and seemingly strewed about by accident. The country we had passed had not always been so bare of people ; it forms part of the great waste made by the raids of the Mavitis and Gwangwaras. We found the first village we came to inhabited by Gindo fugitives from near Kilwa, who being timid folk are terribly bullied by an otherwise insignificant Yao chief, named Golilo. They begged us to make him a present, lest he should revenge our not doing so on them. As we passed on, we heard that a Coast caravan had kidnapped one of the villagers, the first trace of the slave trade. By the roadside I saw an iron furnace, hollowed out of an ant hill. It was not at work, but there was some ore close by prepared for smelting, of which I got specimens. The smelters are Makuas, but the Mweras are the best smiths.

We had just crossed a broad dry river

bed, when we met what we took at first for a caravan, but it turned out to be a fugitive chief and his followers fled from the other side of the river. They told us that the Gwangwaras were out on a raid before us, that some hunters in searching for game had seen them and given the alarm, so they were fleeing they could not tell whither.

We went on to a village of some three hundred houses, under a Makua chief. Livingstone had seen the same people on the other side of the Rovuma, their chief Makochero had moved to this place. At the time of our visit the old man had lately died and his son was not yet formally installed. Here we met another band of fugitives, who said that the Gwangwaras were out behind us, and Makochero's people only stayed in their houses because our presence gave them confidence. They would otherwise have taken refuge on the top of the granite rocks by which their village is skirted. As we heard here of a large Yao caravan having just crossed the Rovuma on its way down, we began to think that there had been some mistake, and perhaps there were no Gwangwaras after all.

From Makochero's we came to the Rovuma.

It was then at its lowest, and at that spot without much current, the whole bed studded with rocks and sand banks and reedy islands. It was fordable in many places and nowhere deep. A more unpromising stream for navigation could hardly be, for some distance a little higher up no water was visible, only a waste of rocks and the sound of water rushing along between them. We were three days more passing up the north bank, and crossed two large rivers, still flowing but very low, which drain respectively the forest wastes, which were once the Gindo and the Donde territories.

All along the Rovuma we were gathering provisions as we could for the Yao forest on the other side. We crossed at a place where the river was broad and still, but covering its whole bed, and looking more like the great river it really is. The water was nowhere more than about three feet deep, and mostly but little above the knee. The men walked straight across, and I was cleverly ferried over a little higher, where there was more current, in a very small canoe.

On the other side we found a Yao village just forming itself, having fled in a body

from near the Lujenda (or Loendi) where the Gwangwaras had certainly been. The Yaos reported that there was another war somewhere before us, and we waited while they sent on to the next village for more certain information. The messengers reported the war as being far off, so we went on, and early in the afternoon came to a village where we met with the only chief who made himself really disagreeable. He was a Donde, one of those who had learnt the trade of thieving from their Maviti spoilers. He was a sort of lieutenant to a bigger man, a Gindo named Mpungawandu, on the other side of the river. He insisted on a much larger present than the other small chiefs were contented with, and threatened to throw all sorts of obstacles in our way if we did not stay all the next day in his village, his people too stole by wholesale from our porters.

The next chief, as if to complete the chaos of tribes, was a Nyassa, he too would gladly have detained us, but being weaker than his neighbour in every way, we went on to the next, a Yao village, whence we got some men to help carry our provisions, and struck off from the river for Mataka's, hoping to find a chief named Liuli about half way.

On the second day of our forest march we met a deformed man, who stood aside to let us pass. The more superstitious of our men took him for a wood demon, and said that if it had appeared as a woman, our deaths would have been certain. It was not a demon however, but a man, he told our people behind that he was fleeing for his life from Liuli's, which had just been destroyed by a party of Dondes from near the Lujenda, that he had seen three men killed and the plundering begun.

Here then was a serious difficulty, some advised waiting, some returning to the Rovuma, and moving up its bank till near the mountains, but the real question was, where were the Dondes going next, they would not probably stay long at Liuli's. I thought it was just as safe to go on as to go back, and besides my patience had been quite exhausted by our delays upon the Rovuma, and I was eager to get forward at any cost. Ultimately we sent three men to go onward cautiously and see whether the road was clear, while we followed.

The first night they returned, and reported all safe for some distance ahead. The second night they did not return. We found that

day a sign of what might be done, if the coast men really desired to benefit the people. We found a fine cashew nut tree in a deserted village, the only coast fruit tree we had seen. The cashew apples were just ripe, and though not the best of fruit by any means, we rushed upon them, and soon cleared the tree. A little further on we came to some marks which seemed to show that our men had halted there, or had left the path we were following. Our Yao helpers were clear that the right road was forward, and so we went on with them to another deserted village, where they left us, and we encamped.

These settlements belonged to a chief named Kang'ninda, and had been abandoned in the May preceding. They were very finely placed on broad swells of high land commanding grand views all round, with a large river near, and little brooks running among granite rocks. One longed to be able to reoccupy them. The next morning we were anxious about our people, and sent men forward to see if they could discover any traces of them, and back to mark the roads from the Cashew nut tree onward to show which way we had gone. Both returned without tidings. Some thought our men had been

surprised and killed, some that they had been scared and run back. Meanwhile our provisions were running out, so we had nothing for it but to go forward.

This afternoon, still among ruined villages we met a small caravan going down. They had a few small tusks of ivory, some loads of tobacco, and about thirty slaves. They reported the road clear ahead, and we gave them instructions for our men, if they met with them. Next day we came to a fork in the road, when one of the men luckily recollected the spot and that the right hand road was the one for Mataka's. The path seemed so overgrown and little used that I had begun to doubt about it, when we met a large caravan, or rather three straggled into one, they had only tobacco and slaves. They told us that they were five days from Mataka's, and that the road was clear, but we should meet with no more houses.

This was bad news for us who had nearly eaten all our stock. About nine the next morning, word was passed to stop as a gun had been heard behind, and soon our three men rejoined us, they had misread the marks near the casewnut tree and thought we had gone back, they did not meet the first caravan,

but slept the night before with the second, who had given them some food, all they had had. We cooked for them at once, and immediately after sent on two men with cloth to get to Mataka's as quickly as possible and bring back food.

The ground was now losing something of its level character, and rising first into long swells, as at Kang'ninda's and afterward into sharper ridges. The trees too were very unlike those in the Mwera forests. There the average diameter may be taken as from one foot to two, with a tall trunk before branching. Here the average diameter would run between six inches and twelve, with far less height of trunk and spread of branches. African trees are as a rule disappointing, there are some really fine ones near the rivers and in hollows, but generally they are ill grown and their foliage scanty, beside being out of leaf for a great part of the year. The Baobabs, which have enormous trunks, only grow tall when surrounded by other large trees and are bare for nearly nine months of the year. The Yao forests have however one tree which we found very useful. It bears a round fruit with russet rind and three large grooved stones surrounded by a small quantity

of very sweet pulp with something of a pearl-like flavour. They were just coming ripe and we ate them by hundreds. The Yaos call them Masuku.

As we went on that day, I saw a woman coming towards us, our leading guide spoke to her and made her turn to follow him. I went up and he told me she had run away from yesterday's caravan, and he purposed to take her to Mataka's. I made him leave her alone, and she went on in the other direction. Wondering how she would fare with our other men, I went back and found they had her amongst them with a load on her head already, to take her back to Mataka's. I made them take off the load, and let her go as she would, whereupon she walked off in the opposite direction. I wished for a city of refuge to direct her to. A little farther on we came to an encampment of the same caravan, where they had left a sick man in a hut with a bag of provisions, to follow on when he could. The men who fall sick are a source of great anxiety to the leaders of a caravan. We had two men who during the whole journey were scarcely for a week able to carry a full load and were obliged at last to leave one of them at Mataka's.

November had now run out, and the rain had begun to trouble us ; we soon found one of its effects when, as we were thinking of making our midday rest, we heard a roaring of water in front, and Chuma went on and found the ford impassable. He immediately set to work, to make a "lie down" (*ulalo*). This is done by cutting a tree so as to fall across the river with its branches holding to the bottom, to keep it from being carried down by the stream. If necessary another tree is cut down to fall from the opposite side and meet it. Then in carefully built *ulalos*, poles are tied to walk upon, and a bamboo handrail fixed, and so a very respectable bridge is formed. Ours was only a rough affair, men stood on the branches of the tree and passed the loads across, and then I was carried over, and so everything passed over dry. We rested and went on again, but were soon stopped by a thunder-storm.

We thought this river was the Luatize, which Chuma remembered crossing with Dr. Livingstone, but the next day we came to a still larger river, which turned out to be the true Luatize, the first is called Lukwisi by the coast men, and Sawizi by the Yaos. Our

road lay for some time along the left bank of the noisy river, and at our rest, as we had shaken the last grains out of our bags the day before, I had nothing to give the men but a big brew of coffee, which they declared to be vastly refreshing.

We passed this morning several cairns on which it was customary for passers by to throw each his stone. A little further on we passed a newly made Arab grave, and all along were remains of old encampments, ominous signs of having had to wait there till the river fell sufficiently to be fordable. Soon after midday however we met a caravan, the foremost men carrying some very fine ivory, several of the tusks being borne between two. Then came tobacco and slaves, and some of the leaders were recognized as Mataka's men. They told us that the caravan belonged to Mataka himself, that our men had slept in their camp very near the villages the night before, and that it was possible we might reach their encampment that night, and find our men there on their way back.

When we got to the ford we found it a scene of the wildest confusion. A place has been chosen where the stream is cut up by six or seven islets with narrow channels between,

the water in some of these was nearly up to the armpits, and ran so strongly that, except for trees laid across to hold on by, it would have been impossible to cross. Over and through these they were bringing some two hundred slaves many of them women and children, and very many with forked sticks fastened to their necks. The noise and tumult were beyond description. We had to wait a while for them, and utilized the time by persuading the leaders of the caravan to sell us a bag of grain.

Just as we crossed, a heavy Scotch mist came on, which changed into a drizzling rain, through which we trudged drearily in hope of reaching the encampment. The dull light and chill rain, the bare trees and the dead leaves beneath them were all as like a December afternoon in England as possible. At last, wet and weary, we turned aside and encamped for the night. A regular caravan encampment is made by cutting pairs of stout stakes, six or seven feet long, with forked ends, and setting them up so as to form two sides of an equilateral triangle, a ridge piece is then laid in the forks which locks them together. Pair after pair are set up till a rough circle is formed according to the size of the caravan.

Straight sticks are laid from the ridge pole on each side on the lines of the pairs of stakes, to form rafters, and then sticks tied horizontally to support the grass, with which the whole is thatched over; small holes are left on the inner side for the men to creep in at, and these are furnished with grass doors, or rather shutters. This great circle of roof without walls is generally divided by partitions into huts for one or two men, a bed is made by laying down two stout logs for the sides, and filling in between them with grass or leaves, over which the sleeping mat is laid. The man then lights a fire close beside him, and all is snug for a week if need be. Sometimes a regular bedstead is made by setting four short forks to support the side pieces, across which short sticks are laid and grass on them. Separate huts are built within the enclosure for the leaders of the caravan, and often a miniature hut for the *tail*. Every caravan ought to have a flag, inscribed and blessed by a man of learning on the coast, which no porter is allowed to pass before on pain of a fine to the flagbearer, and a tail, it may be of an ox or a hyæna, which watches over thefts and misdoings. Neither flag nor tail ought to rest at night among the men, and one ca-

ravan which we met had at each encampment set up a little roof over a bit of the path some distance in advance, where their tail passed the night by itself. I do not know whether our men had a proper tail, there was one with us seemingly used as a fly-flap, but it was stolen at the Donde's village on the Rovuma. The circle of the encampment is generally completed all round, so as to shut out thieves and keep in runaways. Where bamboos and long grass are plentiful, a very neat and useful camp may be built very quickly.

The night after crossing the Luatize we soon got good fires and a plentiful supper, and weke the next day on a good specimen of a May morning, bright and fresh and sparkling. This beginning of the rains is the spring of the tropical year, the trees are coming in of fresh leaf, flowers are everywhere showing themselves. Among the brightest at this time were the gladiolus, scarlet, white lilac, puce, lemon and orange. No one in Yao land need fear to want flowers about Christmas. It was past midday when we came to the Yao encampment, and soon after met our men returning. We were then close to Mataka's villages, and slept in one of them on the night of the eighth of December,

having made twenty seven full days of travelling, the remaining eleven being days and half days of rest and provision seeking. The approach to Mataka's country on this side is well marked by a mountain called Saninga, which shows from a distance a flat summit and a pointed one joined by a kind of saddle. We rounded a great mass of granite rising some five hundred feet nearly perpendicularly, and were immediately in cultivated land.

The men proposed to rest the next day, but I was anxious to see the chief himself, so I compromised by paying native bearers to carry their loads. We stopped at midday at a village on the brow of a hill, where lived Nyenje (or on the coast, Mohammed bin Matumbula) sister's son to Mataka, and therefore by Yao customs of inheritance his next heir. He gave us a goat, and we revelled in abundance.

The view from Nyenje's house is very fine, it looks down a broad valley, from five to ten miles wide, fringed by fantastic craggy hills and studded with villages and towns, several of them with three or four thousand inhabitants. All these are Mataka's subjects. I talked to Nyenje, who speaks Swahili well, about our objects, but he was evidently un-

valley is as bare as any part of England and the great hills round are largely cleared. Every thing here is planted in ridges, which enables the people to bury the grass and rubbish as a sort of manure, and prevents the plants from being stunted by the baking of the dry season, during which the clayey soil becomes dry and hard as a stone.

We were not destined however to make a dignified entrance into Mwembe, for a drizzling rain came on, and as we had to cross several spurs of the main ridge, with steep descents and ascents, ending by the ascent into the town itself, the rain made the clay path so slippery, that we slid and staggered on as we best could in sad disorder. However we blazed away a good deal of powder, and the town turned out in force to look at us. It was a new thing to me to see a genuine town crowd in Africa. Livingstone reckoned about a thousand houses in Mwembe and it has not since diminished. I could not count the houses myself, but I think there were probably quite as many as Livingstone saw. The people have made a curious compromise with their old custom of moving away from the place where anyone dies. They build a new house close to the old one, and

ridge up the clay and rubbish of the old walls into a small plantation of Indian or Kafir corn. Every spare plot is planted so that after the rains the town must look like a sea of green, with house roofs floating upon it.

A steep road led us through the thickest part of the town to where a very large high roof, surmounted by a ridge board, with a head at one end, a tail at the other and something like a man astride near the head, marked Mataka's own dwelling. There is a large yard surrounded by trees in front of it, and in the broad space under the eaves, a sort of earthen throne, three steps high, on one side of the door for the chief himself, and a lower bench on the other for his visitors. There I was placed and the yard soon filled with townsfolk. Mataka came out directly, and sat down on his throne, he understood my Swahili, but would not talk it, preferring to use Chuma, himself a Yao, as an interpreter. He made me very welcome as the second white man he had seen and asked me to turn up my sleeve and let them see my arm, as hands and face had got burnt Arab colour. He offered us the choice of two houses and the men went to get one ready. I sat to be looked at and talked over till they returned and conducted

me, not without firing of guns, to the house which they had chosen. Thither the town followed and Mataka sent us presents of food and Pombe, or Ukana, the native beer, perhaps barley water slightly fermented would best represent it to an English mind. I like it in moderation, and Chuma made me with it and some flour I had brought capital little loaves, which were very acceptable as a relief from the endless rice and fowls, which are the staple food, and the weariness, of every European in tropical Africa. One man actually asked me whether we had any fowls in England, for he had observed that all Englishmen ate so many of them when in Africa. As though we any of us would if we could get anything else ! However at Mwembe we were in a land of plenty, we bought a large goat, and an Arab settled in the town gave us another, and Mataka gave us an ox, and we feasted on an abundance of peas, which grow here, but not nearer to the coast, so that, if the truth be told, we all rather overate ourselves and suffered for it.

The day after our arrival we made up a present for Mataka, and sent him my letters from Zanzibar from the Regent and English Consul General. He seemed very well sat-

isfied, and said we might go anywhere we pleased, and make ourselves at home in his country. He was anxious we should not then go on to the Lake, as in so doing we should probably make friends with his enemy Makanjila. At first he offered us a place in the town, but afterwards got frightened and preferred we should settle nearer the Lake at Losewa. He gets much of his wealth from what he knew we should hate and speak against, the sale of slaves, though Mponda at the outlet of the Shire, and Makanjila are the chief slave sellers. As Mataka represented it, he sell criminals, but of course he sells Makanjila's people when he can get them, and his own men slaves, and a very small offence suffices if the chief is in want of money.

There will be advantages in settling at Losewa, as we shall be masters of the situation there, able to communicate easily with the Scotch settlement, and free from the crowd of importunate beggars, smaller chiefs and the men and women of Mataka's household, who fairly besieged us at Mwembe. Still we must look forward to a house and a school at the head quarters of the tribe, and there is no doubt about this being the larg-

est of all the Yao settlements. The people are in a critical state. They feel that they are backward, and as yet have no pattern to mould themselves by except the coast Arab, and a wretched model it is that he furnishes. As I felt it of the first importance to conciliate Mataka, and was beside then not without hopes that Mr. James and his party might yet arrive, I thought it best to deny myself an actual sight of the lake, and sorting over what remained of our goods, I made up three bales of various cloths, four bundles of beads and two boxes, which I deposited with Mataka to be given to Mr. James if he arrived, or if not, to await my return, which I hoped would be before the end of this present year. I hope that England will not leave me without the means of redeeming my pledge.

I stayed in Mataka's country about a fortnight, when the continual rains and the memory of the rivers behind us made me think it was high time to return. I had explained our plans and wishes as widely as possible, and spoken as I could about our great work, some evidently believed not a word of what I said, some heard with more or less of interest, all promised me a welcome if I returned. I found that I could make myself understood

very frequently in Yao, and that though full of deficiencies the collections for a Handbook of the language printed for us by the Christian Knowledge Society was as a whole very correct and useful. Mataka's women guessed all the enigmas at the end, and brought their companions again and again to hear them. I hope to supply the new Mission with at least a spelling book by the time it is able to begin its work. It seems to me morally certain that the Yaos will be Christians, or Mohammedans before very long, and I think the question will turn a good deal upon which is the first to write and read their language. The Mohammedans have the advantage now, and we must work hard to win it from them. Makanjila has already adopted Mohammedanism and coast usages, the enmity of Mataka with him makes his people more open to Christian teaching. The old man himself abhors Mohammedanism.

I hoped to have gone down to the coast very light and very quickly, but our men, finding that I had few burdens for them, bought such a quantity of tobacco for themselves, that they were more heavily loaded than before. The Yaos use their tobacco almost exclusively in the form of snuff, but

Yao tobacco is specially valued in Zanzibar for chewing, and commands a higher price there than any other sort. There seems to be no legitimate commerce now between the Yaos and the coast except in tobacco and bhang, and a very little ivory, the elephants being nearly all killed off. Caravans are however sent across the lake by Mataka and the other chiefs to buy ivory, which is afterwards sent down to Kilwa, or indirectly through the Makru, to Zanzibar. This want of other trade is of course the chief reason why the Yao chiefs cling so firmly to their slave traffic, the opening of some new commerce would be the surest way of destroying the trade in men.

We made our final start from Mataka's villages on December 22, taking with us abundant provisions, and some Yaos who were skilled in making bark canoes, in case we found the rivers unfordable. In going up we had met few caravans, partly because they avoided us when possible, and I think our guide avoided them. One caravan near Makochero's made a night march to pass us unseen and two slaves escaped from them that night, when they got down to Kilwa they spread a report that we had been dispersed by the Gwangwaras and many of us killed,

and they were believed till Mataka's caravan arrived, and reported meeting us at the Luatize. Now we were in the midst of a rush of caravans both up and down, trying like ourselves to escape the terrible rains.

We were very fortunate in finding both the great rivers bridged by previous caravans, indeed we met one in the act of crossing the second. We made a slightly quicker march down through the Yao forest than we had made going up, and met about halfway a caravan which had left the coast a few days after us, bringing up letters for me from the chief man at Lindi and from the Governor of Kilwa, with recommendations from this last addressed to both Mataka and Makanjila. Another day we met an oldish woman, with a slave stick still on her neck, carrying a bag of cassava root, on her way to Mataka's, having escaped from a caravan which had just turned out of our road to buy provisions, to which she had been sold by Makanjila. One of our men cut off the slave stick, and we gave her the best advice we could to avoid the caravans behind us. We also met the sick man we had seen in the hut as we went up, he said he had found that his caravan had got on so far, that he had better go back

than try to follow it. We offered him some food but he said he did not want it.

We got to the Rovuma on the 1st of January after a short morning's march, and found it much risen. We had to go down much further on the right bank to avoid the two rivers on the other side, which were now impassable. We walked straight through the Donde man's village, who only remonstrated faintly at his friend's not stopping to see him, but he saw we had neither slaves nor ivory, and was beside busy in fleecing a large coast caravan, so that it was not worth his while to do more. We found some new villages established by fugitives from the Lujenda, and the only grain to be bought in the country was what they were fetching from their old half plundered, half undiscovered stores.

We had had as yet little hindrance though much annoyance from the rain. In particular we saw the beginnings of the wet season in the Yao forest, in what I suppose Livingstone means by his sponges. When we went up they were long open glades in the greenness of a new growth of grass, very pleasant to look at after the endless monotony of scrubby trees. In the wet season they gradually become unfathomable masses

of soft mud, out of which they change in the dry time into expanses of black earth baked to stony hardness by the sun. Now we found all the low land full of Rovuma water. We were told that the river was unusually high and it rose two feet while we stayed on its banks for a day to buy food, because famine was reported before us.

I had thus an opportunity of seeing under a different aspect a district of high land near the river which I had thought in going up would make an admirable site for a City of Refuge, or for an intermediate station and resting place. It looked even more promising now. Just by it we met a large caravan, the largest I think which we saw, it consisted of 134 people carrying 61 kales of cloths. The number of these is always the standard by which the importance of a caravan is measured. A few days before we had met another with 35 people and 17 bales, which was I think the smallest. It all we met nine, five belonging to Yao chiefs and four to coast Arabs, most of them having been two or three months on the way, and all exclaiming at the scarcity and dearness of provisions. We found afterwards at Makochero's, where we had bought most of our provisions in go-

ing up, and amongst us we had eaten some hundred fowls, that nothing was now to be had, and everything about the place looked hungry, these nine caravans would represent from 1500 to 2000 slaves, and possibly some 10,000 for the whole year.

The Rovuma was crossed on January 7 at a place where the river flows in one channel, reminding one in breadth and current of the Thames at Westminster when the tide has begun to run out strongly. I think however that it is wider and the water instead of being black was a muddy red. We were ferried over in four small canoes which made seven journeys each. Two days more brought us to the Mwera forest, and just as we left the river we met a man who said he was six days from Lindi, which makes one believe that it is possible for a native going express to get to Mataka's in from ten to fifteen days, as all the coast people say that it is.

It rained now nearly every night and a few days, and we rushed through the Mwera forest, making two days less than in going up, chased by thunderstorms, which generally burst upon us just before sunset, by which time we were huddled in and prepared for them. Here we saw some of the horrors

of the slave trade, as we were close behind a caravan which had left in each day's journey one or more of its number cruelly murdered by the road side, and the very last day before reaching the villages, we came upon a man lying in the path in the very act of dying of hunger and fatigue. He was far beyond all help and we could only watch his last sighs. Surely if there can be a holy war it would be one against a traffic which bears such fruits as these. If we had the means to hire and feed some hundred or two of men to clear, and plant, and build, and fight if necessary, I think this line of trade **at least** might be finally closed, but it would be madness to attempt force unless one had ample means, and at least the passive support of the English government. The true cure must be the abolition of slavery itself on **the** coast, and I think the English government could easily procure it. Let all present slaves be held indebted to their masters in a sum equal to their market value, to be paid in labour or in money as the two may agree, and all future comers to be *ipso facto* free. There would then be no great hardship on the owners, a fitting gift might be found, which would save the Sultan's honour in yielding

to our wishes, and the presence of the Admiral for a few weeks would satisfy his people that he was only submitting to the inevitable. I heard good news at Kilwa on my return, which was that the land route northwards was stopped by war near the Lufiji. We have got beyond half measures, and no native would be surprised at fresh action. If we need a pretext, the fact that Pemba has notoriously imported large numbers of slaves under the eye of the Sultan's officials, and in direct violation of the treaty is more than a pretext, it is a substantial reason. I have no pleasure in detailing horrors, but the actual sight of such cruelties as abound on the slave routes moves one strangely.

On the 16th. of January we were again among the Mweras, for whom I confess a strong liking. They have no slave trade, but drive a brisk business with the coast in Kafir corn, rice, semsem seed, tobacco and copal, to which they have just added Indian rubber, and may add bee's wax, for honey is so abundant that we may almost say their standard food is porridge and honey. The copal lies close to the surface in quite uncertain patches. The Mweras have a tool like a broad spud, with which they sound where they fancy

likely places and by use can recognize at once if they strike copal. The finder is then entitled to all he can stretch over, say six feet each way, beyond which anyone else may dig. Sometimes a lucky find will fill his bag at once, but more commonly the loads taken down to the coast are many days in gathering. I offered to teach any lads that would go down with me, but some did not care to learn, and more were afraid they might never come back. However a beginning is made and in time they will know and trust us. It is sad to think that unless we can do something, their end must be to be swept into hopeless foreign slavery, as at any time by a Gwangwara raid they might be, for they have no principle of unity, and Seyed Barghash's policy makes it impossible for them to get powder, without which their guns are useless.

We made no stay among them, for food was scarce and rain was plentiful, and one night through the obstinacy of our guide who would not stop at a village when the storm threatened, I got for the first time thoroughly wet through. So on January 21 we walked again into Lindi in very good general condition, indeed that one night's rain was the only serious damage we had encountered,

our bell tent having preserved the goods and my waterproof sheets myself from all the previous downpours. We were thus thirty one days from Mataka's country, of which twenty five were full days of marching, and the remaining six, days of resting and food buying.

The road except in part of the Mwera hills needs little but clearing to make it easy for a wagon. The barometer which stood between 29 and 30 at Lindi fell to 27.20 on the ridge of the hills, rose again as we left the Mwera villages and stood between 28 and 29 all the way to Kang'ninda's fully three fourths of our journey, thence to Mataka's it stood between 27 and 28. In Mataka's country it was between 26 and 27. The average of observations at Mwembe gave 26.20, and on the hill above the town it fell to 25.66. There is a road to the Rovuma which is shorter and more level, but the coast men dare not pass it for fear of a Yao chief, Machemba, whom they describe as the most bloodthirsty, treacherous captain of a robber band that one can easily conceive. He certainly has made the country south of Lindi harbour a tangled wilderness, and has blocked the access for the present to the inland

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Makonde, ~~which~~ which lies south of the Mweras and has occupied the coast country between Lindi and the Rovuma.

During my involuntary detention at Lindi I filled up some of the time by gathering a full vocabulary and grammar of the Makonde language, which is interesting in itself, having some forms in common with Sechuana, which are missing in the intermediate languages, and it will be useful when Machebe's dash ~~is~~ ~~when~~ ~~when~~ opens the way through their country where there is still a large area to explore.

I am not at present in a position to say what course of action we might propose to be done by our Missionaries in this direction. I am anxious to redeem my pledge to M'ata, and shall be ready to lead up what volunteers will offer at any time after next June. There ought to be a City of Refuge, or at least a station as a nucleus of settled life on the Rovuma. Then the Mweras cry aloud to us to help them, they are a simple quiet people, scarcely touched at all by coast influence. With a station amongst them and another at Kang'ninda's the road would be cut into short stages and by means of relays of donkeys might be made very easy. Men I think

I shall be able to find, but the money for their passages and food are not as yet forthcoming.

The line I have read has been the scene of terrible destruction since the time that our Mission was founded, and whole nations have practically disappeared. The Yaos are now in every sense the strongest in mind and body as well as in numbers. None of the tribes have a common head, but Mataka, Makanjila and Mpanda are really great chiefs.

The Mweras are even less united, every little group of huts is independent. There is a story current of a Mwera who had thirteen daughters and determined to be a chief. So he cleared a new spot in the forest and every one who wished to marry one of his daughters he made it a condition that he should come and live under him. Thus he soon had thirteen huts beside his own, which in Mwera land is a respectable village.

The Matambwes on the lower or middle Rovuma are almost overwhelmed by refugees Gindos, Dondes, Yaos and Makuas, but their language asserts itself as the common medium of communication.

Near the mouth of the Rovuma lie the Makondes pressed upon by the Makuas from

the South, with Machemba like a cancer in their midst.

Old traders say that the road from Kilwa to the Nyassa used to lie entirely through an inhabited country where food of all sorts was fabulously abundant. East of Kilwa lay the Gindos and South of them the Mweras, East of both these the Dondes, and then on the lower Rovuma Matambwes, and on the upper and along the Lake, Yaos. South and East of the Lake, Nyassas and East of them again the Bisas, who were ardent traders and used to send down caravans of their own to Kilwa. The great disturbers of this state of things were the Maviti or Mazitu, a Zulu army sent on an unsuccessful expedition, which instead of returning to be decimated went north and found a new home round the North end of the Nyassa, whence they plundered and burnt in all directions, even sending an army against Kilwa itself and for the time stopping all trade. They were not great slave dealers, but used to cut off the left hand of such captives as they did not kill. I saw many men thus mutilated.

It is said that during the suspension of trade, some people, called Magwangwara, from near the Lufiji, came to Kilwa, to ask

why no cloth came now to them, and being told of the Maviti, promised at once to clear them out of the way, which they did so effectually, that the Maviti are no longer dreaded. But the Gwangwaras, having felt their power became still worse destroyers than the Maviti had been, and all the more so because they found that slaves were valuable merchandise in the eyes of the Kilwa men. Their custom is to incorporate the more likely of their captives into their own tribes, the rest they offer for sale, and if they cannot get a good price they kill them. The scattered remnants of the Gindos and Dondes were an easy prey, and for a time the Zanzibar market was full of Gindo slaves. The smaller Yao chiefs could offer but little resistance, and though the Gwangwaras have never ventured to cross a large river, or to attack a village in the mountains, they soon found they could easily cross the upper Rovuma in the dry season, and so the country to the North as well as that to the South of the river lay open to them. The poor remains of the Gindos flee backward and forward as they hear of the approach of their dreaded enemies, and the few Dondes left have generally taken to the trade of thieving.

I have mentioned a village on the Rovuma under an exceptional instance of a fighting Gindo, Mpingawandu (stepper of people), who has under him a mixed party of broken men, his chief Lieutenant being a Donde, and the best of his fighting men the remnant of the Maviti army, which went to attack Kilwa and were afraid to return to their own chiefs. I saw in this village several men with their hair worked into a Kafir ring and with faces of the Zulu type. Mpingawandu says that he is tired of war, and wishes to live peacefully, which he carries into practice by squeezing to the utmost passing caravans, and bullying his more timid neighbours. The Yaos might easily if they were united, keep the Gwangwaras from crossing the Rovuma, and though some of the bolder have beaten them off, as it is said one chief, Kandulu, did this last dry season (1875), there are many smaller chiefs who can do nothing but flee.

The stoppage of the Kilwa slave trade would take away the motive of these Gwangwara raids, and the existence of a city of Refuge under men bold enough to give them two or three crushing defeats would teach them not to treat their neighbour as cattle to be driven at their will. Badly handled, ill-

made flint guns are not much better than own spears and shields, but a few modern rifles would soon teach them a different lesson. Now however strong thieves get gunpowder as the price of slaves, and the peaceable are deprived of their only means of defence.

The coast trade itself in anything like its present dimensions seems to be scarcely twenty years old, corresponding in fact to the growth of Zanzibar as a centre of commerce. Yet it must have been once of great extent, or Kilwa could not have been the important city which the Portuguese found it. In the Yao language there are a few words which point to old commercial relations with the coast, especially the name for coast people which is merely the Arab name for Christians, this seems to show that at the coming of the Portuguese there was Arab influence enough among the Yaos to give them an Arab name. The trade died in their hands, and only in our own days is returning to its former importance. The same conclusion may be drawn from the vague acknowledgement of one God by all the nations between the great lakes and the sea. This is just the remnant of Mohammedan teaching, which

might be expected to survive, when that teaching was first forcibly suppressed at the fountain head by a professed Christianity, and then allowed to wither away into forgetfulness, nothing really remaining except a distaste for visible idols. It is only on the young men of the present generation that Mohammedanism is beginning to exert a powerful influence, and this just in proportion as they are struggling into some kind of civilization. It is therefore much more felt by the principal Yao chiefs than by the smaller, or by the less advanced Mweras.

The harvest is ripe, where are the reapers?

EDWARD STEERE.

Missionary Bishop.

ZANZIBAR.

LENT. 1876.



